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#### INDEX:

- (1) "I believe in the Japan-US alliance," says Kyuma in Washington
- (2) Japan desperate in 2+2 meeting to ease America's concerns over Futenma relocation, information leak
- (3) Japan-US dialogue lacks sense of urgency with gap not removed over Iraq, DPRK
- (4) Abe: "Additional action against North Korea may be considered"
- (5) Abe agrees with Egyptian president to cooperate in promoting Middle East peace process
- (6) Nukaga suggests need to discuss whether to possess Tomahawk missiles
- (7) 1996 US government documents reveal plan to deploy 300 aircraft to Futenma to deal with contingency on Korean Peninsula
- (8) Kyuma reveals plan for study on relaxation of three-point arms export ban, eyeing research and development for purposes other than MD
- (9) Ruling bloc eyes committee vote this week on Iraq legislation to extend SDF mission
- (10) UN chief expresses hope for SDF extension in Iraq

(11) Iraqi prime minister: ASDF activities will be become unnecessary before end of the year

(12) Defense Minister Kyuma suggests plan to review Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, envisioning possible expansion of SDF operations

(13) Kyuma: Japan will study ways to allow SDF to contribute to reconstruction in Afghanistan

(14) New Komeito president: Party does not agree to collective self-defense 8

(15) Constitution turns 60 today; LDP considering two-stage amendment; Article 9 left for later

(16) Japanese, Russian foreign ministers agree to cooperate on energy development: Aso expresses concern about abolition of fish catches quota

(17) ASEAN+3 reaches consensus on currency crisis measures: Foreign currencies to be pooled

#### ARTICLES:

(1) "I believe in the Japan-US alliance," says Kyuma in Washington

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
May 4, 2007

Giving a speech in Washington on May 2, Defense Minister Kyuma underscored, "Believe me, I have faith in the Japan-US alliance."

TOKYO 00001989 002 OF 011

Referring to his statement that the Iraq war was wrong receiving criticism from the US, Kyuma pointed out: "Some of you may be worried about my statement. However, you will see there is nothing to be concerned about if you take a look at the history of my activities over the past decade." He then enumerated his own achievements made in strengthening the bilateral alliance, noting: "Who has promoted the missile defense system? Who has called for taking a second look at the Three Principles on Arms Exports? Who has compiled a special law on the realignment of US forces in Japan?" He then indicated a stance of continuing to offer candid advice, saying: "A real friend is a friend who gives frank advice. I would like you to understand my real intention."

(2) Japan desperate in 2+2 meeting to ease America's concerns over Futenma relocation, information leak

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
May 3, 2007

Takuji Nakata, Washington

During the Japan-US Security Consultative Committee (2+2) meeting on May 1, Japanese officials struggled to remove America's concerns about Defense Minister Kyuma's remarks on the realignment plans for the US Forces Japan (USFJ) and a Self-Defense Force (SDF) officer's leak of information on the Aegis system, as US distrust in Japan is growing.

On the relocation of the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture, among other things, the governments of Japan and the United States have now confirmed that no changes will be made to the final report released in May of last year, but the tough task for the Japanese government is how to persuade Okinawa Prefecture.

"I want to implement in any way the agreement reached in last May," Kyuma said at the outset of the 2+2 meeting, revealing his enthusiasm to translate the final agreement on the Futenma relocation into action. At one point Kyuma hinted at making changes to the final report, and when the US reacted, Kyuma went as far as to say, "Don't talk so big," but he now tried to quiet down the fuss he caused.

The US also had strong concern about the leak of US military information on the Aegis system. Japan and the US in effect agreed on the conclusion of a general security of military information agreement (GSOMIA), but this came in a way to dispel America's concerns over the information leakage problem rather than to meet the initial goal of Japan-US cooperation for the missile defense (MD) system.

In the 2+2 meeting this time, Japan and the US appear to have restored their basis for cooperation for now, but it seems tough for Japan to undertake domestic coordination on concluding the GSOMIA, even though Japan has virtually committed to concluding it.

On Futenma relocation, Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima on May 2 reiterated in a firm tone that unless the central government is willing to revise the Japan-US agreement, he will not allow any environment impact assessment.

On the GSOMIA, too, objections are likely to be raised by opposition parties in the process of preparing a domestic law containing punishments for leaking official secrets.

TOKYO 00001989 003 OF 011

(3) Japan-US dialogue lacks sense of urgency with gap not removed over Iraq, DPRK

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)  
May 3, 2007

Hayami Ichikawa, Washington

Confidence-building and reform of the alliance -- these two elements were the key to the recent Japan-US summit and the recent Japan-US Security Consultative Committee (2+2) meeting. Japan and the United States reaffirmed the bilateral alliance as they initially planned and highlighted that as the results of the bilateral summit, but the series of the recent bilateral dialogues appeared to be lacking a sense of urgency when it comes to what to do about Iraq and North Korea.

"The alliance between Japan and the United States has never been stronger," President Bush said. This was a generous tribute paid by President Bush to Prime Minister Abe. This tribute came presumably because of the "souvenirs" prepared by the Abe administration, like a bill aimed at extending the deployment of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) troops to Iraq, a bill relating to the US military realignment plans, and the establishment of a council of experts to discuss the question of the right to collective self-defense, according to a government official.

In dining with Abe, Bush reportedly said: "The most important question at present is which to choose as our dessert -- ice cream or apple pie." This remark got a great laugh.

The most important matter for the US on the diplomatic front is how to resolve the quagmire of Iraq. Japan has continued to back America's action until now. But even in the recent Japan-US foreign ministerial session and the 2+2 meeting, Iraq was not discussed.

For the Abe administration, one major diplomatic goal is how to resolve the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea and the issue of that country's nuclear programs, but it is still unclear whether Japan and the US will be able to work together to resolve them. On the North Korean nuclear issue, Bush and Secretary of State Rice said, "Our patience is not unlimited," going along with Japan. Meanwhile, the US Department of State's annual report on global terrorism released around when the bilateral dialogues were held was proof of America's pragmatic policy with the descriptions about North Korea reduced. Japan, however, did not make any move to discern the real intentions of the US.

(4) Abe: "Additional action against North Korea may be considered"

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)

May 3, 2007

Naoto Maeda, Cairo

At a press briefing at a hotel in Cairo City on the evening of May 2 (night of that day, Japan time), Prime Minister Abe, asked about North Korea policy, referred to the possibility of taking additional sanctions if there is no progress in North Korea's response. Abe said: "Bearing in mind the fact that North Korea has failed to implement what it should implement in the initial stage (as agreed on the six-party talks), we must consider additional sanctions

TOKYO 00001989 004 OF 011

against that country depending on the circumstances. If the abduction issue does not make progress, we must consider a number of sanctions."

(5) Abe agrees with Egyptian president to cooperate in promoting Middle East peace process

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
May 3, 2007

Cairo, Kanai

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, currently visiting the Middle East, arrived in Egypt and met with President Mubarak on the morning of May 2, local time. The two agreed that the two countries should step up their cooperation to bring about peace in the Middle East.

Prime Minister Abe told Mubarak: "Japan would like to enhance partnership with Egypt, which is a strategic hub for the Middle East and Africa." President Mubarak replied: "We want to cooperate in that direction."

Abe asked Mubarak to demonstrate his leadership further to stabilize the security situation in Iraq. In response, the president said: "Of course, I will try to do so, but what is needed is that the Iraqi people strengthen their capability to govern the country."

After the summit, both released a joint statement proposing that the two countries would (1) accelerate efforts to establish a Japan-Egypt science and technology university and (2) hold a Japan-Egypt dialogue forum in Alexandria, Egypt, in November, in order for the two countries to deepen their mutual understanding.

This is the first prime ministerial visit to Egypt since Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit in May 2003. Abe is scheduled to arrive at Haneda Airport this evening.

(6) Nukaga suggests need to discuss whether to possess Tomahawk missiles

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
May 3, 2007

Yoshiyuki Komurata, Washington

Former Defense Agency Director-General Fukushima Nukaga, now visiting the United States, mentioned the need to have the capability to attack an enemy base in preparation against ballistic-missile attacks in a speech on May 1. Nukaga said: "We should debate the question of whether we need to possess precision-guided weapons like Tomahawk cruise missiles and reach a conclusion."

Nukaga said that the ballistic missile defense (BMD) system is "highly reliable," but he added: "Considering cases of being attacked repeatedly by a number of ballistic missiles, I think we must study whether the defense system solely dependent on the BMD system will be perfect."

(7) 1996 US government documents reveal plan to deploy 300 aircraft to Futenma to deal with contingency on Korean Peninsula

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 1) (Excerpts)

May 4, 2007

The US military's plan compiled in 1996 to use Futenma Air Station (Ginowan City, Okinawa Prefecture) to deal with contingencies on the Korean Peninsula and other areas became clear yesterday through US government documents obtained by Kyodo News Service. The plan depicts a blueprint to carry out operations with a total of 300 aircraft: 70 KC130 air-tankers and CH53E transport helicopters that are at the base on a regular basis, plus 230 airplanes that would be deployed to the base in stages. The plan shows that Futenma Air Station is the "frontline sally port" in Asia, according to military analyst Kensuke Ebata.

The plan describes the nature of the envisaged Futenma replacement facility as the base to launch aircraft to deal with conflicts on the Korean Peninsula that would be open to UN forces, in addition to the US military. The substitute facility planned for the coastline of Camp Schwab (Nago City) is likely to play a similar military role in time of a contingency in accordance with an agreement reached between Tokyo and Washington last year.

According to a US military memorandum dated January 23, 1996, shortly before full-fledged Japan-US talks on the reversion of Futenma Air Station in the wake of the 1995 schoolgirl rape incident, the First Marine Aircraft Wing prepared briefing documents on the functions of Futenma Air Station for (then) Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Kurt Campbell.

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The Aircraft Wing in Okinawa explained to Campbell that 300 aircraft would use Futenma in time of a contingency. The documents also noted: (1) 71 aircraft would be deployed at the base in peacetime, (2) in time of a contingency, an additional 142 aircraft would be deployed in stages, including CH53E transport helicopters, CH46Es and KC130s, and (3) also, to deal with escalated battles, 87 planes, including AH1W attack helicopters, would be deployed additionally.

Although the means of transporting additional military aircraft from Futenma to the Korean Peninsula are not specified, some military experts think large transport aircraft can be used. According to the documents, the US military plans to deploy 90 aircraft at Futenma at a peak time.

(8) Kyuma reveals plan for study on relaxation of three-point arms export ban, eyeing research and development for purposes other than MD

YOMIURI (Page 1) (Excerpts)  
May 4, 2007

Igarashi, Washington

Delivering a speech in Washington on the afternoon of May 2, local time, Defense Minister Kyuma revealed that Japan would launch a full-scale discussion on the relaxation of the nation's three principles restricting arms exports. He said:

"Now that we are engaged in joint research and development of weapons between Japan and the United States, it might be necessary to reconsider future options for the three principles."

In a statement issued by the chief cabinet secretary in December 2004, the Japanese government specified that Japan would place weapons developed and produced by Japan and the US for missile

defense (MD) outside the application of the three principles. The US, however, has been promoting research on high-tech defense equipment, such as a next-generation Aegis vessel. Given this, some observers take the view that the defense minister has judged it necessary to also make an exception in the case of joint development

and development for other purposes than MD.

Kyuma added: "We will continue to look into each case, but developing defense equipment costs a lot of money. There are some parts that need joint development and research because of difficulty for a single country alone." He thus indicated that Japan would study its possible participation in multinational joint research and development.

(9) Ruling bloc eyes committee vote this week on Iraq legislation to extend SDF mission

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 6, 2007

Once Diet deliberations resume next week, the ruling coalition intends to take a vote on a bill amending the Iraq Reconstruction Support Special Measures Law at a Lower House special committee by May 11. Meanwhile, the major opposition Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) has introduced its own bill to block the ruling coalition's plan to extend the Self-Defense Forces' mission in Iraq. Stormy developments might unfold in the Diet.

The Iraq legislation for extending the SDF mission for two years from the end of July is the government's top priority in the ongoing Diet session, because it is regarded in a way as "proof" of the Japan-US alliance. The ruling coalition plans to take a vote on it ahead of other bills, with a Liberal Democratic Party executive saying, "Given Minshuto's bill to repeal the legislation, contentious points are clear. All we need to do is take a vote on the bill without making a fuss."

The ruling coalition wants to take a vote quickly, given mounting important bills with an end to the current Diet session approaching. They plan to have Lower House approval of three education related bills in mid-May and the bills reforming the Social Insurance Agency and the National Civil Service Law by the end of May.

Committee deliberations on the Iraq legislation, the education reform bills, and the bill amending the National Civil Service Law require the attendance of Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki. They also require coordination of timetables for cabinet ministers making replies in committee sessions. The ruling camp might be forced to narrow down priority bills.

(10) UN chief expresses hope for SDF extension in Iraq

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 5, 2007

SHARM EL SHEIKH-Foreign Minister Taro Aso met with Ban Ki Moon, secretary general of the United Nations, in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt,

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on the afternoon of May 4 (on the evening of the same day, Japan time).

In the meeting, UN Secretary General Ban highly appreciated Aso for Japan's assistance to Iraq's reconstruction. "We want Japan to continue its contribution as long as possible with its deployment of

TOKYO 00001989 007 OF 011

Self-Defense Forces personnel," Ban said to Aso. With this, he expressed hope for extending the Air Self-Defense Force's airlift mission from Kuwait to Iraq.

Ban as UN secretary general met with Aso for the first time. The government has already presented a bill to the Diet at its current session to revise the Iraq Special Measures Law. "I thank the United Nations for its appreciation," Aso told Ban.

In addition, Ban expressed his expectations for Japan's support of the United Nations' efforts to reform its secretariat, including its department of peacekeeping operations, and for the issue of Darfur in the Sudan. Ban also asked for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's attendance at a UN General Assembly session to be held in

September.

(11) Iraqi prime minister: ASDF activities will be become unnecessary before end of the year

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 6, 2007

Sharm el-Sheik, Egypt, Kyodo

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki indicated on May 4 that demand for the Air Self-Defense Force's airlift operations in Iraq would not last long, saying: "The presence of the Japanese troops would become unnecessary by the end of this year." The Iraq prime minister revealed this view in an interview with Kyodo News Service in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheik. Maliki also announced a plan to seek reconstruction assistance by Japanese civilians who can make use of their experience and technology.

Maliki's remarks clearly exposed a difference in perceptions on assistance between the Japanese government and Iraq.

(12) Defense Minister Kyuma suggests plan to review Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, envisioning possible expansion of SDF operations

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 6, 2007

Yoshifumi Sugita, Brussels

Defense Minister Kyuma held a meeting with accompanying reporters at a hotel in Brussels on the night of May 4 (dawn of May 5, Japan time). Envisioning a possible expansion of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) operations with the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law set to expire in coming November, he indicated a plan to establish a senior staff council of relevant senior officials intended to discuss how to conduct peacekeeping operations so as to review that law and create a new law.

Kyuma said: "I want to have an internal discussion in the ministry as to whether to extend or repeal that law or whether another operation will be started." "If Japan engages in such activities as transporting members of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in addition to refueling now provided in the Indian Ocean, we must study what to do about the existing law. The aim of that law is to back America's war of self-defense. That law is not intended in legal terms to help Iraq to reconstruct itself," Kyuma added.

TOKYO 00001989 008 OF 011

The Antiterrorism Special Measures Law has served as the basis for the SDF to provide logistical support and the like for operations in Afghanistan the US and other countries have conducted since the terrorist attacks in the US in 2001. The government, however, has limited the SDF's logistical support to refueling by Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) ships in the Indian Ocean to US, British and other countries' forces, considering the local security situation.

Kyuma's remarks imply that Japan will consider expanding the SDF's operations so that Japan will engage in reconstruction assistance in Afghanistan. The senior staff council is expected to be headed by the defense minister and meet once a month.

(13) Kyuma: Japan will study ways to allow SDF to contribute to reconstruction in Afghanistan

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
May 5, 2007

Yoshifumi Sugita, Brussels

Defense Minister Fumio Kyuma held talks with North Atlantic Treaty Organization Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer in Brussels on the afternoon of May 4 (late hours of May 4, Japan time). As a

result, the two leaders reached an agreement to promote assistance for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. After the meeting, Kyuma told a press conference: "We would like to conduct discussions in the Diet on what kind of assistance the Self-Defense Forces would be able to provide, including transporting civilians." In response, de Hoop Scheffer said, "I hope Japan will extend cooperation in any way possible."

The United States and other countries are conducting mop-up operations against terrorists in Afghanistan. Japan has been providing fuel to vessels of the United States and other countries in the Indian Ocean under the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law.

Kyuma's comment is regarded as Japan's plan to search for ways for allowing the SDF to contribute to reconstruction assistance.

(14) New Komeito president: Party does not agree to collective self-defense

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
May 3, 2007

New Komeito President Akihiro Ota said in a street-corner speech in Tokyo yesterday: "Although our party does not deny the necessity for specific case studies regarding gray areas, it naturally does not allow the use of the right to collective self-defense, while calling for keeping Article 9, Paragraphs 1 and 2, in the Constitution intact." He made this remark in connection with an expert panel recently established to look into the partial allowance of collective self-defense, which is prohibited under the government's interpretation of the Constitution.

Ota stressed that he had already told Prime Minister Abe: "(Panel members) should not discuss the matter with the intention of gradually allowing collective self-defense in a gray area," adding that they have agreed on this view.

(15) Constitution turns 60 today; LDP considering two-stage

TOKYO 00001989 009 OF 011

amendment; Article 9 left for later

TOKYO (Top play) (Abridged)  
May 3, 2007

A national referendum bill is now expected to get through the Diet about the middle of this month, and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party yesterday began to study a two-stage amendment of the Constitution. The first stage is to hold a national referendum on whether to constitutionalize environmental rights and privacy rights that can easily get approval not only from the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) and the New Komeito, the LDP's coalition partner, but also from the general public. Article 9 will be left until later.

The bill says the Diet will initiate amendments to relevant matters and will then put them to a national referendum. Meanwhile, a total of 44.5% were negative about amending Article 9 in a Kyodo News poll conducted in mid-April, with only 26.0% affirmative.

Based on this way of initiating amendments, and in response to the trends of public opinion, one LDP member says the LDP should first propose initiating amendments that are easily acceptable to the people so that the general public will get used to national referendums. Another LDP lawmaker insists that the LDP should first propose amendments that other parties cannot oppose and that Article 9 should be amended later.

The Diet is scheduled to set up a constitutional review panel in both chambers after this July's election for the House of Councillors. The LDP will outline draft amendments to the Constitution in the Diet panels.

The parliamentary constitutional panels are to study constitutional affairs for a period of three years until the national referendum law comes into effect. However, the LDP deemed it possible to



outline prospective amendments. The LDP would like to push ahead with discussions based on a final report worked out in April 2005 by the House of Councillors Research Commission on the Constitution. The review panel will be set up both in the House of Representatives and in the House of Councillors, so the two panels will coordinate with each other for discussions.

#### Commentary: LDP preparing to initiate amendments

The LDP has now begun to study revising the Constitution in two stages. This move is aimed at reading the LDP to amend the Constitution at once if the Diet can initiate amendments three years after the national referendum law comes into effect.

The Diet is expected to gear up for amendments to the Constitution if the national referendum legislation gets through the Diet. Concerning this move, a New Komeito executive has denied the possibility of instantaneous amendments, saying: "The Diet cannot initiate amendments for at least three years. The Constitution will not be amended at once. That's a matter for the future."

However, the LDP will get everything ready to revise the Constitution. "We will not take it easy for three years," says one LDP lawmaker who experienced a cabinet ministerial post.

The LDP undoubtedly positions the national referendum legislation as a big step forward toward revising the Constitution and takes this

TOKYO 00001989 010 OF 011

as an opportunity to move toward constitutional revision.

(16) Japanese, Russian foreign ministers agree to cooperate on energy development: Aso expresses concern about abolition of fish catches quota

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Slightly abridged)  
May 4, 2007

Foreign Minister Aso on the afternoon of May 3 (evening of the same day, Japan time) met with his counterpart Lavrov at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both agreed that Japan and Russia would cooperate on development of energy in Russia's Far East and East Siberia regions. Japan will provide technology cooperation on such areas as development of liquefied natural gas and the refining of oil. They also reaffirmed that both countries would promote talks on the signing of a nuclear power agreement concerning nuclear nonproliferation.

Aso and Lavrov also agreed to launch an expert panel to discuss a possible disaster-prevention cooperation program and the conservation and usage of the ecosystem in areas near the Northern Territories. They also decided to hold a summit between Prime Minister Abe and President Putin on the sidelines of the G-8 Summit to be held in Hailigendamm, Germany, in June.

Aso expressed concern about President Putin's April 26 state-of-the-nation address, which indicated a policy of allocating fish catches quotas to domestic companies by abolishing the practice of allocating such to foreign countries. He noted: "If a situation in which Japanese fishermen cannot operate in Russian waters occurs, it could cause a major problem. Japan has a strong interest in the matter." In response, Lavrov said, "The fisheries agreement between the governments of Japan and Russia is part of Russia's federal legislation. I expect the accord to be implemented."

Regarding the Northern Territories issue, Aso once again conveyed to the Russian side Japan's basic position that Japan has sovereignty over Etorofu, Kunashiri, Shikotan, and the Habomai group of islets and that it will not conclude a peace treaty with Russia until the issue of the attribution of the four islands is settled. Aso and Lavrov agreed to continue talks in order to find a settlement that both Japan and Russia find acceptable. However, no specific progress has been made. They decided to hold a bilateral vice-foreign-ministerial-level strategic dialogue on May 29 to discuss such issues as the territories.

(17) ASEAN+3 reaches consensus on currency crisis measures: Foreign currencies to be pooled

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)  
May 6, 2007

A foreign ministerial meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Japan, China and South Korea (ASEAN+3) was held in Kyoto on May 5. Participants agreed to establish a new system of putting up foreign currencies for member nations to use in the event of a currency crisis. Under the system, each country would conclude multilateral accords and disburse portions of foreign currencies to be held in one place. The aim is to enable a quick response in the event of a crisis. Currency cooperation in Asia will thus enter a new stage ten years after the currency crisis of 1997.

TOKYO 00001989 011 OF 011

Under the system agreed upon, when the value of a certain country's currency plummets, it can borrow foreign currencies, such as US dollars, from the reserves to carry out price-bolstering purchases of its currency. Member nations will consider the specifics of the system, such as eligible recipients of foreign reserves and disbursement quotas allocated to each country, over the next several years.

According to the joint statement released after the meeting, each recipient country will set a policy of managing the foreign currencies it borrowed. The system is likely to start off as a loose framework.

Currency cooperation in Asia is at the moment based on bilateral agreements. The proposed system is based on the Chiang Mai Initiative, which was agreed upon at the ASEAN+3 foreign ministerial meeting held in 2000 following the 1997 Asian currency crisis. At present, there are 16 bilateral agreements among eight countries. The amount of foreign currency available for lending totals approximately 9 trillion yen. All 13 member nations, including countries that have not yet signed bilateral agreements, will likely join the new multilateral agreement.

DONOVAN